Thailand

Northern & Central – Asian Birding at its Best

Southern – Rainforest Birding Extension



Siamese Fireback by Nigel Redman

Thailand is quite simply the quintessential birding destination of Southeast Asia, boasting a fantastic diversity of habitats ranging from high mountain peaks draped with rhododendron forest to extensive mudflats and saltpans, and dense tropical lowlands resounding with birdsong. This tour is designed to take advantage of the influx of migrants from the north in addition to an amazing array of Asian species, including a host of localised and range-restricted specialities. Siamese Fireback, Silver Pheasant, Great Hornbill, Long-tailed Broadbill, Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo, Blue Pitta, Great Slaty and Black-headed Woodpeckers, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Ratchet-tailed Treepie, Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Giant Nuthatch and Green Peafowl are just some of the potential highlights of this incredible tour.! Furthermore, culturally, Thailand has few equals, and you will have opportunities to visit some of the many spectacular pagodas and shrines that adorn this friendly, varied and spectacular land.

Southern peninsular Thailand showcases a rich lowland forest ecosystem supporting many seldom-seen bird species. During this extension, we will be targeting a wonderful array of lowland forest specialities, including Blue-winged, Mangrove and Malayan Banded Pittas, Malayan Black Magpie, Red-crowned Barbet, and an assortment of colourful kingfishers and broadbills. The nocturnal birding here is also fabulous and we stand good

chances of finding Oriental Bay Owl, Barred Eagle-Owl, Spotted and Brown Wood Owls, and Gould's and Blyth's Frogmouths. Furthermore, we will explore the nearby mangroves by boat and enjoy a day trip to the Similan Islands to find the brilliant Nicobar Pigeon, among other local specialities.

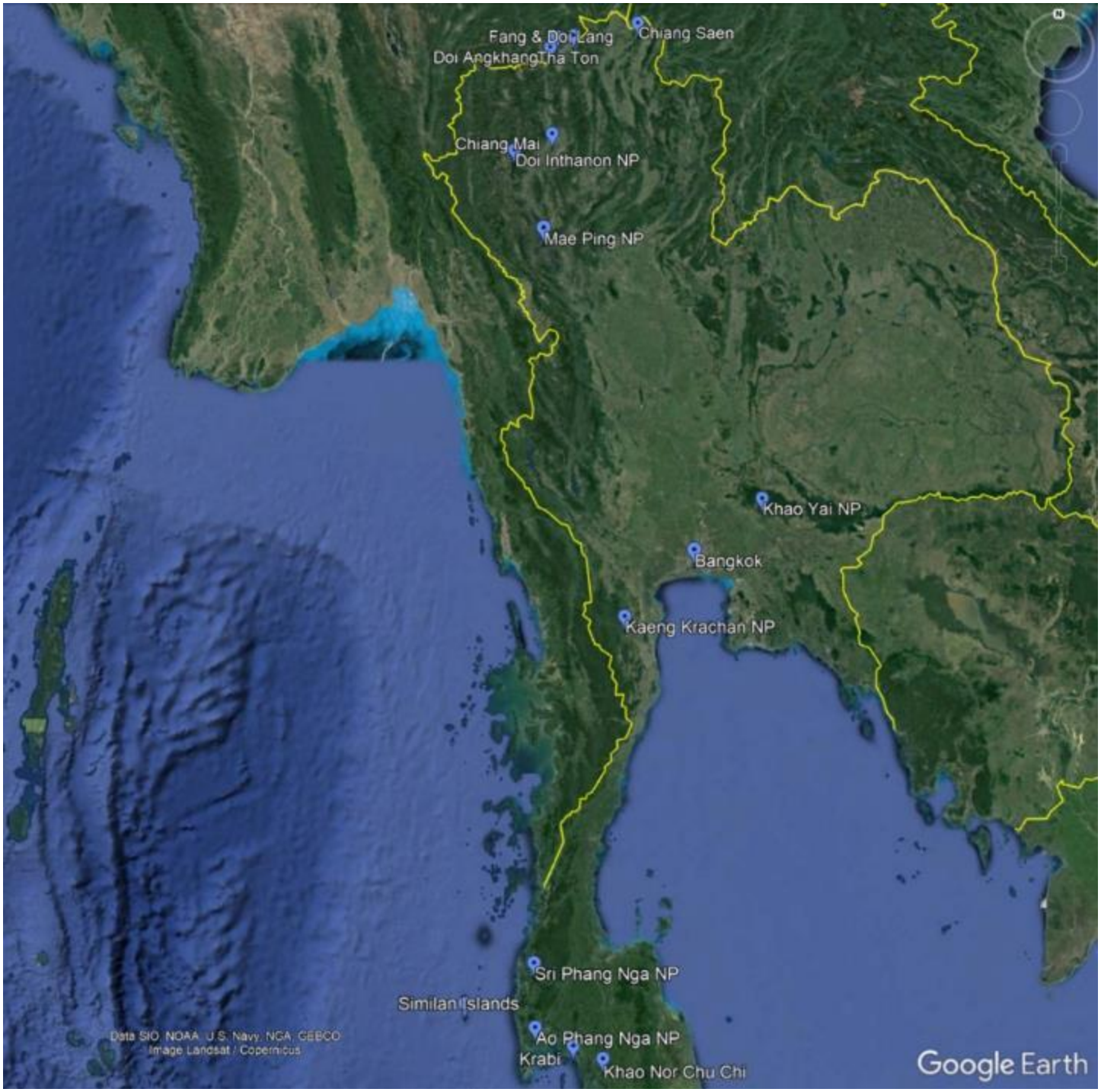
Itinerary & Map

Northern & Central

Day 1	**Arrival in Bangkok**
Day 2	**Bangkok to Kaeng Krachan via Phetchaburi**
Days 3 & 4	**Kaeng Krachan National Park**
Day 5	**Kaeng Krachan National Park to Khao Yai National Park**
Days 6 & 7	**Khao Yai National Park**
Day 8	**Khao Yai to Bangkok and flight to Chiang Mai**
Day 9	**Chiang Mai to Mae Ping National Park via Huai Hong Khrai**
Day 10	**Mae Ping National Park to Doi Inthanon National Park**
Days 11 & 12	**Doi Inthanon National Park**
Day 13	**Doi Inthanon National Park to Fang**
Day 14	**Doi Lang**
Day 15	**Doi Ang Khang**
Day 16	**Doi Lang**
Day 17	**Fang to Chiang Saen, via Tha Ton**
Day 18	**Chiang Rai to Bangkok & depart**

Southern Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Bangkok, flight to Krabi & transfer to Khao Nor Chu Chi**
Days 2 & 3	**Khao Nor Chu Chi**
Day 4	**Khao Nor Chu Chi to Ao Phang Nga National Park**
Day 5	**Similan Islands**
Day 6	**Sri Phang Nga National Park to Krabi**
Day 7	**Krabi Mangroves and flight to Bangkok**


Fang & Doi Lang
Doi Angkhang
Tha Ton
Chiang Saen
Chiang Mai
Doi Inthanon NP
Mae Ping NP
Khao Yai NP
Bangkok
Kaeng Krachan NP
Sri Phang Nga NP
Similan Islands
Ao Phang Nga NP
Krabi
Khao Nor Chu Chi
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus
Google Earth

Birding sites in detail



Spoon-billed & Broad-billed Sandpipers and Lesser Sand Plovers by Rob Williams

Phetchaburi. We'll drive south from Bangkok to the Gulf of Thailand in Samut Sakhon province. Time will be spent exploring the mudflats, mangroves, saltpans and shrimp pools in search of the many special shorebirds that winter in this area. Top of the list is the endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, and we stand an excellent chance of finding this incredible rarity mixed in with the other waders. Several other highly sought-after species can also be found here, such as Asian Dowitcher and Nordmann's Greenshank, which are both becoming increasingly rare and difficult to find throughout their ranges. Greater Sand, Lesser Sand, Pacific Golden and Kentish Plovers, Long-toed, Red-necked and Temminck's Stints, Great Knot, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, Broad-billed, Curlew and Terek Sandpipers, Brown-headed Gull, Whiskered, Caspian, Gull-billed, Common and Little Terns, Little and Indian Cormorants plus an abundance of other shorebirds can all be expected during the day. We may also find a few of the area's scarcer but generally annual visitors such as Slender-billed Gull, Red-necked Phalarope and Far Eastern Curlew. Brahminy and Black Kites are often seen hunting over the surrounding area, and we can expect our first introduction to many of Asia's widespread species such as Red Turtle, Spotted and Zebra Doves, Black Drongo, Siamese Pied Myna and Scaly-breasted Munia. Other noteworthy and eye-catching species that we may see during our time in this bird-rich area include the beautiful Black-capped and Collared Kingfishers, Racket-tailed Treepie and Malaysian Pied Fantail.

Laem Phak Bia. Here we will do a short boat trip to a sand bar that is a particularly good site for the increasingly scarce Malaysian Plover. This spot is also a decent location to look for the rare Chinese Egret and the recently elevated White-faced Plover. Greater Crested and sometimes even Lesser Crested Terns are present alongside the myriad of Brown-headed Gulls. We will search carefully through the roost that is usually present, as Pallas's and Slender-billed Gulls have been seen here in the past. Following our boat trip, we will make a short search for Golden-bellied Gerygone and any of the wader specialties that we may still require.



Black-throated Sunbird by Keith Valentine

Kaeng Krachan National Park. The fantastic national park of Kaeng Krachan, established by the King of Thailand after a visit to the area in 1981, has the richest bird list in Thailand,

exceeding 420 species. It is the largest national park in the country (>3,000 square kilometres) and is situated on the eastern side of the Tenasserim Mountain Range near the Myanmar border. Many of the special birds in Kaeng Krachan are species from the southern portion of Thailand that reach their geographical northern limit here.



Spectacled Barwing by Rob Williams

We will spend our time scouring the beautiful, verdant forests that cloak the surrounding hills covering most elevations and every habitat type, from the more open low elevation forest along the entrance road to the bamboo-cladded hills around the very top of the road.

In the higher altitude forest around the hill-tops, we will search for the very special Ratchet-tailed Treepie, an extremely localised and rare species, especially in Thailand, as well as the lovely Red-bearded Bee-eater, rare Yellow-vented Green Pigeon, Little Cuckoo-Dove, Blyth's Shrike-Babbler, Flavescent, Ochraceous, Ashy and Olive Bulbuls, Chestnut-flanked and Hume's White-eyes, Dark-sided, Hill Blue and Verditer Flycatchers, Greater Green Leafbird, Yellow-vented and Plain Flowerpeckers, Black-throated Sunbird and the zippy Streaked Spiderhunter. Mixed species flocks will also be a feature of Kaeng Krachan and working these exciting waves of activity could produce Speckled and White-browed Piculets, Great Iora, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, the bamboo-dwelling Yellow-bellied Warbler, Striated Yuhina, White-browed Scimitar Babbler, Golden, Collared and Spot-necked Babblers, and Brown-cheeked Fulvetta among many other species.



Black-and-red Broadbills by Keith Valentine

In the bamboo-dominated mid-elevations we will seek out the vociferous Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Large Hawk-Cuckoo, the rare bamboo-specialist Bamboo Woodpecker, Banded Kingfisher, Black-and-yellow, Silver-breasted, Dusky (rare), and Banded Broadbills, the sneaky Rufous-browed Flycatcher, Puff-throated and Rufous-fronted Babblers, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, gorgeous Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker and Pin-striped Tit-Babbler. Driving along the forest track that leads up into the hills in the early morning and late afternoon will undoubtedly be our best opportunity of finding the shy Grey Peacock-Pheasant, Bar-backed Partridge and Kalij Pheasant. The former species is usually particularly shy and tough to see but we will try our best to obtain views of this spectacular Asian mega. If we are very fortunate, we might even connect with some of the reserve's rare residents such as Rusty-naped Pitta or Ferruginous Partridge.

The most productive birding is likely to be along the flat, entrance road that meanders through Kaeng Krachan's



Hill Blue Flycatcher by David Hoddinott

lowland forest. The birding here can be superb in the early morning with highlights including Great Slaty, Streak-breasted, Crimson-winged and Rufous Woodpeckers, Greater Yellownape, Common and Greater Flamebacks, sought-after Black-thighed Falconet, Collared and Asian Barred Owlets, the tiny, fast-flying Vernal Hanging Parrot, Thick-billed and Wedge-tailed Green Pigeons, Green-billed Malkoha, Asian Emerald, Violet, Moustached Hawk and Banded Bay Cuckoos, Grey-rumped Treeswift, Blue-bearded and Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, small, noisy flocks of Oriental Pied Hornbills, the uncommon Tickell's Brown Hornbill, immaculate Green-eared, Blue-throated and Blue-eared Barbets, striking Black-and-red Broadbill, Ashy Woodswallow, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, bright red and glossy-black Scarlet Minivet, Black-naped Oriole, Bronzed, Hair-crested and the spectacular Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher, Black-naped Monarch, noisy but shy and secretive groups of White-crested, Black-throated, Greater Necklaced and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes, Large Scimitar Babbler, the magnificent Sultan Tit, Black-headed, Black-crested, Stripe-throated and Streak-eared Bulbuls, Dark-necked Tailorbird, Sulphur-breasted and Pale-legged Leaf Warblers, melodious White-rumped Shama, Asian Brown, Taiga, Hainan Blue and Chinese Blue Flycatchers, Blue-winged and Orange-bellied Leafbirds, the brilliant Ruby-cheeked, Olive-backed and Crimson Sunbirds, and Yellow-eared Spiderhunter.

We will also have a look at the small, seasonal ponds and pans along this road as these sometimes harbour White-throated and Black-capped Kingfishers, the shy, scarce Black Bittern, Chinese Pond Heron and White-breasted Waterhen, while in the more open areas we will also keep a lookout overhead for soaring raptors that could include Crested Honey Buzzard, Crested Goshawk, Besra and the impressive Mountain Hawk-Eagle. In the evenings we'll try for Collared Scops Owl and Large-tailed and Indian Nightjars around our accommodation.

Mammal-wise, we may be fortunate to see some of Kaeng Krachan's fantastic species such as Yellow-throated Marten, Banded and Dusky Langurs, Stump-tailed Macaque or White-handed (Lar) Gibbon. These are all generally unobtrusive, but we'll certainly keep our eyes peeled for these lovely mammals.



Black-headed Woodpecker by David Hoddinott

Khao Yai National Park. We'll be exploring the densely forested hills and riversides of this exceptional reserve. Khao Yai protects one of the largest pristine tracts of tropical rainforest in Southeast Asia and holds a wide variety of bird and mammal species, including the rarely seen Tiger, Dhole and Asian Elephant.

Top of the most wanted list are the elegant Siamese Fireback and Silver Pheasant, while others in the same family include Red

Junglefowl and difficult Green-legged Partridge. We will also keep a careful watch for raptors which could include species such as Shikra, Grey-faced Buzzard, Black Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle and Black Baza. Oriental Pied Hornbill, Common Hill Myna, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Thick-billed Green Pigeon and the dazzling Asian Fairy-bluebird regularly visit fruiting trees, and this is also where we'll have a chance of the seeing the rare, nomadic and superb Golden-crested Myna. Mixed flocks attract species such as Greater Flameback, Black-headed, Grey-eyed, Stripe-throated and Puff-throated Bulbuls, White-bellied Erpornis, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Great Iora, Swinhoe's Minivet, Large Woodshrike, Sulphur-breasted and Claudia's Leaf Warblers, and the vibrant Sultan Tit.



Rufous Limestone Babbler by Polly Neldner

The undergrowth in this fantastic park also provides shelter for several skulking species, including Blue and Eared Pittas and the elusive Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo. We will try our best to find these beautiful and much-wanted rarities, but we will require a fair dose of luck, perseverance and patience to see them. Other forest interior skulkers and undergrowth inhabitants that we will be on the lookout for include the secretive Orange-headed and Siberian Thrushes, Common Green Magpie, Black-throated and charismatic White-crested Laughingthrushes, Hainan Blue and Mugimaki Flycatchers, Abbott's, Puff-throated and Rufous-capped Babblers, and Siberian Blue Robin. Additional star birds include Barred Cuckoo-Dove, incredible Great, Wreathed and Austen's Brown Hornbills, Laced, Heart-spotted and Black-and-buff Woodpeckers, Orange-breasted and Red-headed Trogons, beautiful Long-tailed Broadbill, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, White-throated Rock Thrush, Alström's Warbler and Olive-backed, Black-throated and Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds – to name but a few. Great Eared Nightjar, Collared Scops Owl and Brown Boobook are possible nocturnal highlights, while mammals that occur include Northern Pig-tailed Macaque, vociferous Lar and the scarce Pileated Gibbons, Black Giant, Grey-bellied and Variable Squirrels, Sambar Deer and Northern Red Muntjac.



Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo by David Hoddinott

Bangkok. Near to Bangkok, we will make a stop at a Wat (temple) to search for the localised Rufous Limestone Babbler.

Doi Inthanon National Park. Doi Inthanon is undoubtedly Thailand's most famous birding site and at least 380 species have been recorded in this park, which also incorporates Thailand's highest mountain. Many Palearctic and Himalayan species from further north reach their southern limit here due to the

reserve's vast contrast of habitat and elevation change. The elevation ranges from 340m up to 2,565m and, fortunately for us, a traversable road runs all the way to the summit.



Large Niltava by Keith Valentine

Time will be spent birding the productive road to the summit where we will explore expanses of dipterocarp woodlands, farmlands and moist evergreen forest. Near the top, there is also a sphagnum bog surrounded by rhododendron trees where several interesting species can be found.

The dry woodlands at lower elevation hold avian specialities such as the tiny Collared Falconet, scarce White-rumped Falcon, Rufous Treepie, Black-hooded Oriole, Burmese Nuthatch, incredible White-bellied and Black-headed Woodpeckers (the latter four species are becomingly increasingly rare), Black-backed Forktail and Purple Sunbird. The evergreen forests at higher elevation are where we will spend the majority of our time, and over the two full days we can expect to find a good number of the following species: Black-tailed Crake, Lesser Yellownape, Stripe-breasted Woodpecker, Golden-throated and Great Barbets, Golden and Buff-breasted Babblers, Spectacled Barwing, splendid Silver-eared Mesia, Blue-winged Minla, Rufous-backed and Dark-backed Sibias, Large, Small, Rufous-bellied and Vivid Niltavas, Blyth's and Clicking Shrike-Babblers, Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Japanese and Yellow-cheeked Tits, Eyebrowed, Chestnut and Grey-sided Thrushes, the secretive Slaty-bellied Tesia, Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler, Grey-headed Parrotbill, Short-billed Minivet, White-throated and Yellow-bellied Fantails, Black, Striated, White-headed and Flavescent Bulbuls, Davison's Leaf and Chestnut-crowned Warblers, Yunnan Fulvetta, Chestnut-vented Nuthatch, Hume's Treecreeper, and Yellow-vented and Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers are all on the target list.

We will also take some time to enjoy some of the park's impressive waterfalls and cascades. Besides offering some wonderful photo opportunities they also provide habitat for White-crowned and Slaty-backed Forktails, and White-capped and Plumbeous Water Redstarts. The rhododendron-covered summit of Doi Inthanon holds a number of unique species that are almost impossible to find elsewhere in the country and we will make a special effort to bird this area during one of our mornings. Possibilities here include both Speckled and Ashy Wood Pigeons, Rufous-throated Partridge, Bar-throated Minla, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Yellow-browed Tit, Blyth's, Ashy-throated and Buff-barred Warblers, the often confiding White-browed Shortwing, Pygmy Wren-Babbler, Dark-sided Thrush, Eurasian Woodcock, Silver-eared Laughingthrush, Snowy-browed Flycatcher and the gorgeous Mrs. Gould's and Green-tailed Sunbirds.



Green Cochoa by David Hoddinott

The forests of Doi Inthanon also harbour several rare and seldom-recorded species such as the incredible Green and Purple Cochoas, Fire-capped Tit, Asian Stubtail and minute Black-throated Parrotbill, which we will naturally keep a sharp eye open for. We will also venture out in the evenings to an area near our accommodations in search of the tiny Oriental Scops Owl. Collared Scops Owl is also a possibility in this area, while nightjars here include Savanna and Indian.



Pied Harrier by Glen Valentine

Time permitting, we'll target the increasingly uncommon Blossom-headed Parakeet - this being one of its last strongholds in the country. On previous tours we have even recorded Grey-headed Parakeet, though these days it is a serious rarity. Other good species we may find during our time here include Chestnut-tailed Starling, Striated Swallow, Black-hooded Oriole, Purple Sunbird, Racket-tailed and Rufous Treepies, Indochinese Blue Flycatcher and even Chinese Francolin.

Huai Hong Khrai. Huai Hong Khrai is host to one of the world's most spectacular birds - the beautiful Green Peafowl. We will spend some time searching for this incredible bird and may also find a few other species such as Black Baza, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Common Flameback, Red Junglefowl, Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker, the uncommon Rosy Minivet, Golden-fronted Leafbird and Eurasian Jay.

Mae Ping National Park. Mae Ping has large tracts of dry dipterocarp forests, a habitat most similar in flora and fauna to that of northern Cambodia. Species of note include Black-headed, Great Slaty, Grey-capped Pygmy, Rufous-bellied and the uncommon White-bellied Woodpeckers, Grey-headed Parakeet, Chinese Francolin, Rufous-winged Buzzard, Rufescent Prinia, Red-billed Blue Magpie, the diminutive Collared Falconet, increasingly scarce Burmese and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, White-browed Fantail, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Eurasian Jay, Radde's Warbler and Indochinese and Large Cuckooshrikes. This open forest habitat tends to heat up quickly during the day so to maximise our birding here, we will require an early start.



Green Peafowl by Nigel Redman

Fang. The northern town of Fang gives us excellent access to Doi Lang and Doi Ang Khang. En route from Mae Ping to Fang, we will make a few scheduled birding stops at sites for Wire-tailed Swallow and Green Sandpiper, and again at an area of rice

paddies which can be good for Pied Harrier, Oriental Skylark, Common and Pintail Snipes, Greater Painted-snipe and Grey-headed Lapwing.



Giant Nuthatch by Forrest Rowland

Chiang Dao Temple. Situated in beautiful forest at the base of the imposing mountain of Doi Chiang Dao. The walk up to the temple can be quite productive for birding, and some good species including Streaked Wren-Babbler, Bay Woodpecker, Striated Yuhina, Purple-naped Sunbird, White-crowned Forktail and Pin-tailed Green Pigeon may be found.

Doi Lang. This morning we will have an early departure as we strike out for the fabulous birding site of Doi Lang. The mountains here form a border with Myanmar and today we will have numerous views into this beautiful country. Our prime target for the early part of the morning is the rare and much desired Mrs Hume's Pheasant. One of the roads that lead towards the summit of Doi Lang passes through an excellent stretch of this species' preferred habitat and we stand a fair chance of finding this incredible pheasant. While searching for this bird, we also have good chances of finding Mountain Bamboo Partridge (another sought-after speciality) feeding at the roadside.

We will bird this zone for the very special Giant Nuthatch, while other targets include Spot-breasted Parrotbill, Grey Treepie, Rufous-fronted and Yellow-eyed Babblers, Aberrant Bush and the recently described Claudia's Leaf Warbler, Hill Prinia, White-bellied Redstart, Lesser Shortwing, Crested Finchbill, White-gorgeted, Slaty-blue, Ultramarine, Sapphire (rare) and Pale Blue Flycatchers, Cook's Swift, Slender-billed and Maroon Orioles, White-browed Laughingthrush, Siberian Rubythroat, Little, Crested and Chestnut Buntings, and Common Rosefinch.

On another day, we head up to the mid and high-elevation forests. These areas hold a superb variety of birds including the vivid Scarlet-faced Liocichla. Other species occurring in this zone are Oriental Turtle Dove, pocket-sized Collared Owlet, Blue Whistling Thrush, Bay and Crimson-breasted Woodpeckers, Grey-backed Shrike, Black-throated Bushtit, Black-eared Shrike-Babbler, Long-tailed Sibia, Slaty-backed and Rufous-gorgeted Flycatchers, Buff-throated Warbler, Black-throated Sunbird and Large and Small Niltavas. Several rare species for Thailand have also been found on this mountain, and possibilities include Rusty-naped Pitta, Red-tailed and Spot-breasted Laughingthrushes, Spot-



Mrs. Hume's Pheasant by Alasdair Hunter

winged Starling, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Grey-cheeked Warbler, Himalayan Cutia and Scarlet Finch.

Access to the highest reaches of Doi Lang has recently become an issue with the military taking strict control of the area. There are other roads up Doi Lang that, if passable, can provide access to some slightly different habitat. Predicting access to the high elevation is almost impossible and we will have to see what the military's stance is on arrival. High-elevation species that are only likely to be found if accessing this zone include Whiskered Yuhina, Red-flanked and Himalayan Bluetails and Chestnut-headed Tesia, while Red-billed and Coral-billed Scimitar Babblers are only possible if access via the alternative road to the top is possible.



Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler by Forrest Rowland

Doi Ang Khang. The spectacular area of Doi Ang Khang, a rugged and scenic mountain that forms the border between Thailand and Myanmar. The Thai government has established watershed protection and upland agricultural projects here to conserve the remaining forest patches and these areas are particularly productive for birding.

The area is famous for holding many great species, including the seldom seen Spot-breasted and Pale-billed Parrotbills, Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Daurian Redstart, Crested, Chestnut and Little Buntings, Brown-breasted Bulbul, Crested Finchbill, Rusty-cheeked and White-browed Scimitar Babblers, Mountain Tailorbird, Yellow-streaked Warbler, Russet Bush Warbler, Pied and Grey Bush Chats, White-browed and Speckled Piculets, Long-tailed Minivet, Bianchi's and Martens's Warblers, shy White-necked Laughingthrush, Spot-throated Babbler, White-gorgeted Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Japanese White-eye, Olive-backed Pipit and Striated Yuhina, amongst many others.



Spot-breasted Parrotbill by Forrest Rowland

Time permitting, we'll also visit the area's King's Project, which can be a particularly productive site for finding thrushes such as Black-breasted, Scaly, Eyebrowed and Grey-sided. The King's Project is also a good area for Hill Blue Flycatcher, stunning Rufous-bellied Niltava, White-tailed Robin, Plain Flowerpecker, Maroon Oriole and Spot-winged Grosbeak. With luck we may also encounter a day-roosting Hodgson's Frogmouth, a species that resides in these mountains. Giant Nuthatch and the remarkable Mrs Hume's Pheasant also inhabit this mountain, though we will require a very healthy dose of luck to see these rare species at this site.

Chiang Rai. The area around Chiang Rai is dominated by a mosaic of wetland habitats including rice fields, fishponds, overgrown wet areas, pools, and the Mae Khong (Mekong) River, making this area an excellent location for birders to look for a wide variety of resident and migratory bird species. The geographical location of Chiang Saen, in particular, makes

it a prime site for finding birds that are rare in Thailand and almost every year new species are added to the Thai list from sites around the town.

Mae Khong River. Along the mighty Mae Khong River, we will look for flocks of the dainty Small Pratincole, along with a variety of waders including chances for the threatened River Lapwing, Common Greenshank, Little Ringed Plover, Green Sandpiper and Temminck's Stint. Long-billed Plover is now extremely scarce at this site, and we would need a fair dose of luck to find this species. In the surrounding reeds and scrub, we will look for Jerdon's Bushchat along with both the Plain and Yellow-bellied Prinias, Dusky Warbler and Red Avadavat. Although their numbers are significantly reduced, this also remains one of the only places where we are likely to see Grey-throated Martin in Thailand.



Banded Kingfisher by Forrest Rowland

Chiang Saen. The Chiang Saen Lake (Nong Bong Kai non-hunting area) attracts large flocks of waterfowl, and we are likely to see Lesser Whistling and Indian Spot-billed Ducks in good numbers. Some of the migrant species we may also encounter include Garganey, Ruddy and Common Shelducks, Northern Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Common Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Pintail and Ferruginous Duck. The rare Baer's Pochard occurs in small numbers and is an annual winter visitor to this site, though is by no means guaranteed. The surrounding fringes support Black-winged Stilt, the handsome Grey-headed Lapwing, Grey-headed Swamphen and both Bronze-winged and spectacular Pheasant-tailed Jacanas. Depending on water levels, Common and Pintail Snipes will occasionally flush underfoot while White-browed and Ruddy-breasted Crakes skulk through dense vegetation. Overhead we may enjoy the striking Pied Harrier, and in the surrounding woodland, we may encounter Greater Coucal, Lineated and Coppersmith Barbets, and Laced Woodpecker.



Hodgson's Frogmouth by Rob Williams

Tha Ton. Here we will explore an area of open farmlands, rice paddies and riversides for Pied and Eastern Marsh Harriers, Ruddy-breasted Crake, Bluethroat, Lesser Coucal, Baya and Streaked Weavers, Black-collared Starling, the now scarce Striated Grassbird, sneaky Baikal Bush Warbler, Barred Buttonquail, Indochinese and uncommon Horsfield's Bush Larks, Red-throated Pipit, Citrine Wagtail, Red Avadavat and, if lucky, Yellow-breasted Bunting. The endangered Jerdon's Bush Chat used to be found at this site, but the habitat here has been severely altered by various farming activities and the once extensive Tha Ton marsh is sadly now almost non-existent. This has put serious pressure on the habitat specific Jerdon's Bush Chat with the result that the species is almost gone from this site now. We will, however, keep our eyes open for this species as we bird the area.

Khao Nor Chu Chi. We'll be exploring the steamy lowland forest found within this biologically significant reserve. Here we will search the complex network of trails traversing the dense forest vegetation for the area's specials. This is not an easy habitat to bird and dedication; patience and a little luck will be required to connect with our desired bird highlights. One of the most famous birds in this area is the stunning Gurney's Pitta, which was fantastically rediscovered at this site in 1986. Unfortunately, the bird is in serious trouble as the forest here has become highly fragmented and sightings are now very rare. The last record was in May 2015 and research has indicated that only one, possibly two females might still reside at this site. Sadly, it appears that this spectacular species may have vanished from Thailand forever.



Chestnut-breasted Malkoha by Keith Valentine

There are, however, plenty of other avian highlights to search for in this forest, many of which are difficult to see elsewhere. Some of the possibilities include Blyth's Hawk-Eagle, Black-bellied and Chestnut-breasted Malkohas, Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo, Silver-rumped Spinetail, Brown-backed Needletail, Red-throated and Sooty Barbets, Crested Jayshrike, secretive Large Wren-Babbler, migratory Green-backed Flycatcher, and White-bellied Munia. Khao Nor Chu Chi can also be an excellent place to find Violet Cuckoo, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, the ornate Whiskered Treeswift, brilliant Red-bearded Bee-eater, Banded Kingfisher, Golden-whiskered and Red-crowned Barbets, Streak-breasted Woodpecker, the tiny Rufous Piculet, dazzling Green Broadbill, Malayan Black Magpie, Rufous-winged Philentoma, a fantastic eleven species of bulbul, the unbelievable Sultan Tit, Van Hasselt's Sunbird and Thick-billed, Spectacled, Grey-breasted and Yellow-eared Spiderhunters – to name just some.

At nearby sites we will search for additional species such as Red Junglefowl, Grey-capped Pygmy and Banded Woodpeckers, beautifully coloured Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Plaintive Cuckoo, Raffles's, Red-billed and Green-billed Malkohas, Crested Goshawk, the impressive Rufous-bellied Eagle, the unique and appropriately named Racket-tailed Treepie, Dark-throated Oriole, Crow-billed Drongo, White-rumped Shama, Oriental



Great Eared Nightjar by Keith Valentine

Magpie-Robin, a variety of babblers, including Ferruginous, Moustached, Black-throated, Chestnut-winged, Puff-throated, Grey-headed, Rufous-fronted and Rufous-crowned, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Arctic and Eastern Crowned Warblers, Rufous-tailed Tailorbird and Thick-billed, Yellow-breasted, Crimson-breasted, Orange-bellied and Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers.



Nicobar Pigeon by Nigel Redman

In the evenings an effort will be made to search for nocturnal species, with Spotted and Brown Wood Owls and Large-tailed and Great Eared Nightjars all possible. In addition, the chance of seeing frogmouths is a big attraction for this forest and, with a bit of luck, we may well find both Blyth's and Gould's (the latter being the more difficult). Another major target species is the little-known and under-reported Oriental Bay Owl, which for a long time was considered a very tough species to find. Khao Nor Chu Chi, however, is without a doubt one of the best sites to try and locate this beautiful and elusive owl.

Ao Phang Nga National Park. Here we will explore the mangroves for the stunning Mangrove Pitta. Other birds we may see in this habitat include Ruddy and Brown-winged Kingfishers, Mangrove Whistler, White-chested Babbler, and overwintering Sakhalin and Kamchatka Leaf Warblers.

Similan Islands. Today we will board a boat bound for the Similan Islands. The boat trip across to Mu Ko Similan National Park will take about an hour and a half. This island is the best place in the world to find the spectacular Nicobar Pigeon, a thickly plumed iridescent speciality that is virtually guaranteed on a visit to the island. Other birds we will look for include White-bellied Sea Eagle, striking flocks of black-and-white Pied Imperial Pigeons, Green Imperial Pigeon and Bridled, Little, Black-naped, Common and Roseate Terns. The national park also supports a roost of Island Flying Foxes, which can be seen during the daytime in large numbers.



Mangrove Pitta by Keith Valentine

Khao Lak. A series of islets and a large rocky area hold a variety of wintering species at this time of year, and may include Greater Crested and Lesser Crested Terns, Eurasian Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Kentish and Grey Plovers, Terek Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler, Pacific Reef Heron and occasionally the rare Chinese Egret.

Sri Phang Nga National Park. There is a mouth-watering list of possibilities here and we will look out for Wallace's Hawk-Eagle, White-crowned, Bushy-crested, Great, Wreathed, Black, and even the huge Helmeted (rare) Hornbills. On our walk through the forest, we cross several shallow streams, home to the scarce Blue-banded and Blue-eared Kingfishers, shy Chestnut-naped Forktail,

and Lesser Fish Eagle. The dense forests here hold many exciting, avian jewels and, although often shy, with patience and persistence we may obtain views of Crimson-winged, Checker-throated, Buff-necked and Buff-rumped Woodpeckers, Rufous-collared Kingfisher, Red-bearded Bee-eater, Malayan Banded and Blue-winged Pittas, Dusky and Green Broadbills, Raffles's, Chestnut-breasted and Red-billed Malkohas, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Green Iora, Grey-bellied and Scaly-breasted Bulbuls, Black-capped, Abbott's and Short-tailed Babblers and, with luck, Orange-headed and Siberian Thrushes.



Black-capped Kingfisher by David Hoddinott

Krabi Mangroves. Along the littoral edge of Krabi are a network of rich mangroves, mudflats and sandbars that teem with birdlife. We will enjoy a boat tour exploring the maze of mangroves that support several interesting species. These include Brown-winged Kingfisher and the secretive and beautiful Mangrove Pitta. Other species we may see include Black-capped, Ruddy, Common and Collared Kingfishers, Chestnut-bellied Malkoha, Malaysian Pied Fantail, Olive-winged Bulbul, Dusky Crag Martin, and Pacific and Rufous-bellied Swallows. At nearby sites, we will search for the elusive Mangrove Whistler and White-chested Babbler, if we still need them, while other birds may include Ashy and Dark-necked Tailorbirds.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease	■ ■ ■	Undemanding. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels & mobility capabilities.
Birding Ease	■ ■ ■	Moderate. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions but get trickier within forested environments.
Accommodation	■ ■ ■	Comfortable.
Walking / Trails	■ ■ ■	Fair amount of walking, mostly on roads and tracks. Some optional trails which can be slippery, muddy, or rocky. (Walking sticks can be helpful).
Vehicles / Roads	■ ■ ■	Mostly good quality roads in a comfortable vehicle. Some long drives.
Photography	■ ■ ■	Good to excellent, depending on habitat.
Annoyances	■ ■ ■	Leeches are sometime present. Boat crossing to Similan Islands can be rough, weather dependent.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 18 of the Northern & Central tour;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 7 of the Southern tour;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- Some of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover some long distances to reach the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack, the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg for check-in luggage and 8kg for hand luggage.
- Leeches do occur in some of the reserves but encountering them really depends on how much recent rain there has been. If you do have leech socks, it will be useful to bring them along; otherwise, tucking your long pants into your socks is usually sufficient to deter them from latching on. However, leeches are seldom an issue on this tour, given the time of year we visit.

Arrival and Departure Details

The Northern & Central tour starts with an arrival day in Bangkok, and you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude at Bangkok International Airport after lunch on day 18.

The Southern Extension departs from Bangkok International Airport after lunch on day 1 and will conclude here after lunch on day 7.

As both tours end after an internal flight on the final day, it is recommended that you book your international flights to depart no earlier than the early evening.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Bangkok International Airport, Bangkok (IATA: BKK) is the main port of entry and departure for international flights into Thailand and is well serviced by many of the world's major airlines.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.